DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 214 269 EA 014 498

AUTHOR Riley, Bob E.
TITLE Accountability in Education: A Recurring Concept.
PUB DATE 77
NOTE 33p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Accountability; Administrator Role; Educational History; *Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; Outcomes of Education; *Program Evaluation; School Community Relationship; School Role; Systems Approach; Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS Newcastle Report (England); Texas

ABSTRACT

Based on the belief that the popularity of accountability periodically waxes and wanes in education, this article outlines a bit of the history of the concept and defines and explains educational accountability. The author traces the roots of accountability back to the 1858 Newcastle report, the first comprehensive survey of English elementary education. He also finds a precursor in Frederick Taylor's efficiency movement in the early twentieth century. Several definitions and models of educational accountability are offered, all emphasizing the need for a plan of action, specific goals, and the evaluation of outcomes. A four-part process to use when developing an accountability program is briefly outlined and a short model for systems analysis is also presented. Accountability in the state of Texas is outlined (including, in the appendix, a list of the dimensions of accountability as set forth by the Texas Education Agency). Finally, the author advocates accountability as a cooperative endeavor among students, community, and the school. (Author/JM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED214269

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Bob E. Riley

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION:

A RECURRING CONCEPT

by

Dr. Bob E. Riley

Assistant Professor of Education

Sul Ross State University

Alpine, Texas

1977

EA 014 498

ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION:

A RECURRING CONCEPT

Educators must become aware of and responsive to the concept of accountability in education. There is a general outcry from the public condemning the present system of education and with the current theme of "back-to-basics" in our schools. Can education really be held accountable for the "basics" when it is mandated to cure a gamut of social ills? Our schools are required to teach too many "educations"; the three "R's" of education has always been expected, but now sex education, driver education, drug education, special education, handicapped education, ethics education, free-enterprise education and so on are consuming the days and not enough time is left for reading, writing, and arithmetic. Historically, the quest for accountability seems to have its ups and downs. It is very popular for awhile, then the crisis subsides until a stimulus is given to the public and the demands and concerns surface again.

BACKGROUND FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is defined by Webster as "a quality or state of being accountable...a statement of explanation of conduct...an exposition of reasons, causes, grounds, or motives; a reason giving rise to an action or a result." Accountability as a concept is not new. It surfaced during Biblical times as evidenced by the words of Matthew" ....and every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof..."

The leaders of England during the 1850s were very concerned about the quality of educational programs and in 1858 a commission of educators was formed which published the Newcastle Report. The Newcastle Report was the first comprehensive survey of English elementary education. The committee was

charged with making recommendations that would be specific and clear enough to provide sound and cheap elementary education. The commisssion established three recommendations. They were (1) continue public support, (2) distribute government funds only to those schools and teachers that have an ADA of 140 days per year and where students attain a certain degree of knowledge, and (3) payment would be based on results (Small, 1972:438). The results segment was designed to hold educators accountable.

The Newcastle study had several ramifications. First, it led to the development of a minimum requirement examination for each grade. These minimum requirements were to be based on performance criteria. A second result was the lessening of expenditures for national education. However, it was soon evident that teachers were teaching for the test and there was a total lack of interest on the part of the students. The program was discontinued in 1864, because the Newcastle Report recommendations placed too much of a burden on the teachers and the school, while ignoring students and individuality (Small, 1972:439).

The accountability movement in the United States had its early beginnings in business and industry. The thinking of Frederick Taylor became prominent in the United States around 1900, with his involvement in the time-work efficiency movement (Taylor, 1911). The educators of the time felt that this concept had merit and they attempted to equate schools with factories, insinuating that students were like raw materials and student achievement was similar to an industrial product. Therefore, teachers should be responsible for the manufacturing of raw materials into useful products. Some of educational leaders of the day had the attitude that schools were very similar to factories, that children could be shaped and molded to meet their life's work, much like a piece of metal could be shaped and molded to

perform a task. In 1909, Ellwood P. Cubberly stated that the schools have "been called upon to undertake...the educational features no longer provided by the home or the shop. The industrial capabilities and the character of the child were now to be shaped...to meet the changed conditions of life" (Cubberly, 1909:41). Franklin Bobbitt, an educator in 1913, was also an advocator of the efficiency movement. He felt that every teacher should know exactly what is expected of him and that each teacher should be able to turn out a product of some definite sort and shape. The educational results and abilities of the product would indicate the ability of the teacher (Lipham and Hoeh, 1974:22).

These men had stated objective ideas, but their results were not acceptable when questions of accountability were asked. What are the answers to the many questions of educational accountability? It appears that there are no simply defined answers; however, educators need to find a combination of partially favorable answers which may product a satisfactory solution.

EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

What exactly is "Educational Accountability?" Stephen J. Knezevich poses this definition:

> Accountability is a system of operation for delivering desired educational outputs that specify the desirable and measurable outcomes to be achieved. The assignment of responsibilities to members of the organization to achieve these objectives, are the assessment of achievements to ascertain relationships between inputs and outputs (Knezevich, 1975:599).

There are many similar definitions that could be used and they all allude to the same idea though the terminology may differ. The prevailing concept of accountability in general terms is that the educator should have the ability to show that he is doing what he said he was going to do.

Those who see accountability as a move toward progress in education point out that well-defined responsibilities will generally have positive outcomes. However, if individuals are to be held accountable, then they must know exactly what results are sought. Program goals will need to be stated in performance terms and behavioral objectives developed for each activity, thus clarifying the purposes and goals of all programs. Consequently, this will make it easier to determine if the desired results are attained. To reach the required levels of accountability, educators will have to develop greater skill in goal setting, diagnosis of needs, and the analysis of learning problems. There will also be a need for increased emphasis on improved communication and involvement of pupils and parents in the educational programs, in conjunction with teachers and administrators.

Educators have always been concerned about the results of their teaching. Most teachers have been willing to try new ideas and concepts. However, many of the new ideas are merely fads and not educationally sound. John I. Goodlad spoke of the "waves of concern" that have been experienced by educators for over a quarter century. These "waves" dealt with new approaches in teaching reading, teaching "new" math, toughening up education, humanizing education, doing away with traditional methods, and more. Each "wave" always tried to "dwarf" the prior one and each one introduced a new approach designed to cure the educational ills of the time (Goodlad, 1975: 108-112).

The bottom line for all innovations is that they need funding in order to be implemented. The money has to come from the public and, as previously mentioned, the public is beginning to question the educational system and they appear to have legitimate questions concerning the output of the schools. The schools are being asked to do more than ever before, with

vast amounts of money being spent in education, but the educational priorities have not been clearly established.

Lessinger points out that our schools are failing one student in every four (1970:3) and Goodlad indicates that 70 percent of the elementary teachers have left the teaching profession during the first three years following graduation from college (1975:108-112). There are many other indicators substantiating the fact that our schools are depriving the students and teachers from developing their skills and potential. It is felt that the accountability movement may provide the structure and direction needed to retain many of the young professionals in education.

Wilson C. Riles mentioned in his writings that (1) schools have outrun school funds, (2) the public is no longer satisfied with allocations that do not clearly reflect the priorities, (3) reasons for priorities and the expenditures should be balanced, and (4) where possible, the factors involving education should be reduced to hard facts. He also stated that public expectation for accountability should be combined with their participation in the accountability program (Riles, 1971).

ACCOUNTABILITY AND CHANGE

Accountability has brought new terms, concepts, and ideas into the field of education. A great deal of the money is going into educational planning such as educational engineering, performance contracting, voucher plans, systems analysis, cost effectiveness, behavioral objectives, and educational audits (Lessinger, 1970:3-19). Parents, citizens, community and government agencies, school boards, and students will be holding educators responsible for specific results in the schools of the future.

Accountability has led to an attitude change in nearly everyone connected with education. Teachers and administrators are viewing their positions in a new light--a more objective light. One recent approach to educational thinking is systems theory.

Systems theory is defined as a goal-oriented methodology, involving formal procedures for identifying goals, the methods for achieving these goals, an organization plan, a device for measuring accomplishment, and a system for revision as necessary (Hostrap, 1973:167). Tasks within the system must be those which are observable and measurable. Some educators are warning that teachers may have a tendency to teach what can be measured rather than measuring what is taught. This appears to be one of the major cautions in the accountability movement.

Another new term which accountability has introduced to educators is educational engineering. Educational engineering is a function which claims to help schools obtain a workable technology of education. It is needed as a mechanism for analyzing the benefits of programs, making the arrangements for the installation of new programs, and involving a third party to evaluate the results (Lessinger, 1970:90).

IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCOUNTABILITY

There are many models of accountability currently in use. One model presented by Pino, outlined the following criteria for the establishment of an accountability model:

1. Timely. The accountability system should be so timed as to begin and terminate at times that will insure proper collection, analysis and reporting of pertinent data.
2. Adaptable. The accountability system should be flexible enough to be a usable tool for all program components and variables.
3. Viable. The accountability system should be both desirable and operationally feasible.

4. Efficient. The accountability system should be economically sound as related to program goals, scope, and impact.
5. Comprehensive. The accountability system should be broad enough in scope to include an analysis of all program components and to utilize a range of types acceptable to measures.
6. Credible. The accountability process and result should be such as to be accepted by the target audience of any report issued as a result of the effort.
7. Significant. The accountability system should yield results that will make a difference in the future operation of the system.
8. Relevant. The accountability system should relate the degree to which the program results meet the stated goals for which the program was intended.
9. Objective. The accountability system should provide for an independent, unbiased review, feedback and report of program effectiveness.
10. Valid and reliable. The accountability system should meet the standard elements of sound evaluation practice including: internal validity, reliability, objectivity, and internal and external measures (Gephart, 1975:12-13).

This model is illustrative of the need for additional components to bring about needed changes in our educational system. In order to have effective teaching and learning, authorities and educators all point to the fact that (1) the educator must have a plan, (2) there must be a method to define what the needs are, (3) educators need to specify what one wants to accomplish in measurable terms, and (4) an outside group is needed to evaluate the plan and to see that the goals and objectives are being met. By implementing an accountability model one can then determine who is accountable to whom and for what.

The following is a process for developing an accountability program:

Phase 1: preliminary planning

* assess needs
* develop a preliminary change strategy
* consider use of technical assistance and management systems
* decision to move, or not to move, to Phase 2

Phase 2: formal planning

* community-staff involvement
  --repeat needs assessment
  --repeat change strategy development
* develop goal-consensus and performance objectives
* consider plan-program-budgeting systems
* decision to move, or not to move, to Phase 3

Phase 3: program implementation

* develop program staff
* implement program procedures
* consider
  --performance contracting (internal and/or external)
  --network monitoring
* predetermined completion points of program efforts reached

Phase 4: rendering the account

* program evaluation
* reporting the results
* using an educational program auditor
* determining level of confidence
* certifying the nature of results (Browder and others, 1973:51).

An educational system is made up of many interrelated parts -- all, hopefully, interacting: learners, teachers, administrators, parents, school boards, local and national agencies, also, procedures, instructional materials, and hardware. The following is Laurnor F. Carter's model for a systems analysis to be used within existing educational systems:

1. State the real NEED you are to satisfy.
2. Define the educational OBJECTIVES.
3. Define the real-world limiting RESTRAINTS.

4. Generate many different ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS.
5. SELECT the best alternative(s) for testing.
6. IMPLEMENT the alternative(s) for testing.
7. Based on experimental and real-world results, FEEDBACK the required MODIFICATIONS and continue this cycle until the objectives have been attained (Hostrop, 1973:76).

If the above steps are not possible, this model will be of little value.

Lynn Turner writes that the State of Texas has been a leader in the accountability movement. The Texas Education Agency (T.E.A.) has moved toward a systems approach to management using a planning process model (Appendix 1). The Texas State Board of Education has also required the public schools to begin using an accounting system outlined in the T.E.A. Bulletin 679, a system patterned after Handbook II of the United States Office of Education which facilitates the Program Planning, Budgeting, Evaluation System (PPBES) approach. A state-wide computerized data bank called the Educational Management Information System (E.M.I.S.) has been developed to provide data on all school districts in the state. Further, the T.E.A. accreditation division has begun to expect a product-oriented performance emphasis in the public schools using behavioral objects in the classroom that will reflect progress toward the identified goals of each school district in order to retain accreditation (Turner, 1972:20-21). Lastly, the T.E.A. has defined the dimensions of accountability that should be considered in the development of accountability programs (Appendix 2).

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ON ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability in education is a concept that seems to come and go, rise and fall as society becomes more or less critical of public education. Admittedly, it is a rather ambiguous, less precise term to come to grips with, but it is a concept educators must understand. Being able to show

that you are doing what you said you would do, being ready to be held accountable for what you agreed to do and the realization that you are working with the most valuable resource in every community -- its youth -- are all concepts that educators must reflect upon and be prepared to cope with. As more school districts write goals and objectives, with input from students, staff, and community, the concept of accountability will be viable. Developing meaningful goals and objectives will provide the long-range direction many school districts need. Once the goals and objectives have been written, individual goals can be assigned to grade levels and then monitored for accomplishment. Schools should be held accountable for its graduates and every community should have input as to the kind of citizen they want the schools to produce. The school district goals and objectives should dictate the kind of graduate that walks across the stage in the spring of the year. This cooperative endeavor between the student, community and school will hopefully be the model of accountability for the future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Browder, Lesley H. Jr., William A. Atkins, Jr., Ejin Kaya. Developing An Educationally Accountable Program. Berkeley, California: McCutcheon Publishing Corporation. 1973.

Cubberly, Ellwood P. Changing Occupations of Education. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1909.

Gephart, William J. (ed.) Accountability: A State, A Process, or A Product? Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. 1975.

Goodlad, John I. "A Perspective on Accountability." Phi Delta Kappan. October, 1975.

Hostrop, R.W., J.A. Michlenbirger, and J.A. Wilson (eds.) Accountability for Educational Results. Handon, Connecticut: The Shoe String Press. 1973.

Knezevich, Stephen J. Administration of Public Education. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers. 1975.

Lessinger, Leon. Accountability in Education: Every Kid a Winner. Palo Alto, California: Science Research Associates. 1970.

Lipham, James M. and James A. Hoeh, Jr. The Principalship: Foundations and Functions. New York: Harper and Row Publishers. 1974.

Miller, William C. "Accountability Demands Involvement." Educational Digest. April, 1977.

Pine, Gerald C. "Teach Accountability: Methods and Readings." The Educational Forum. November, 1975.

Riles, Wilson C. "Public Expectations." Educational Testing Service, Conference on Accountability. March, 1971.

Small, Alan A. "Accountability in Victorian England." Phi Delta Kappan. March, 1972.

Taylor, Frederick W. Scientific Management. New York: Harper and Row, 1911.

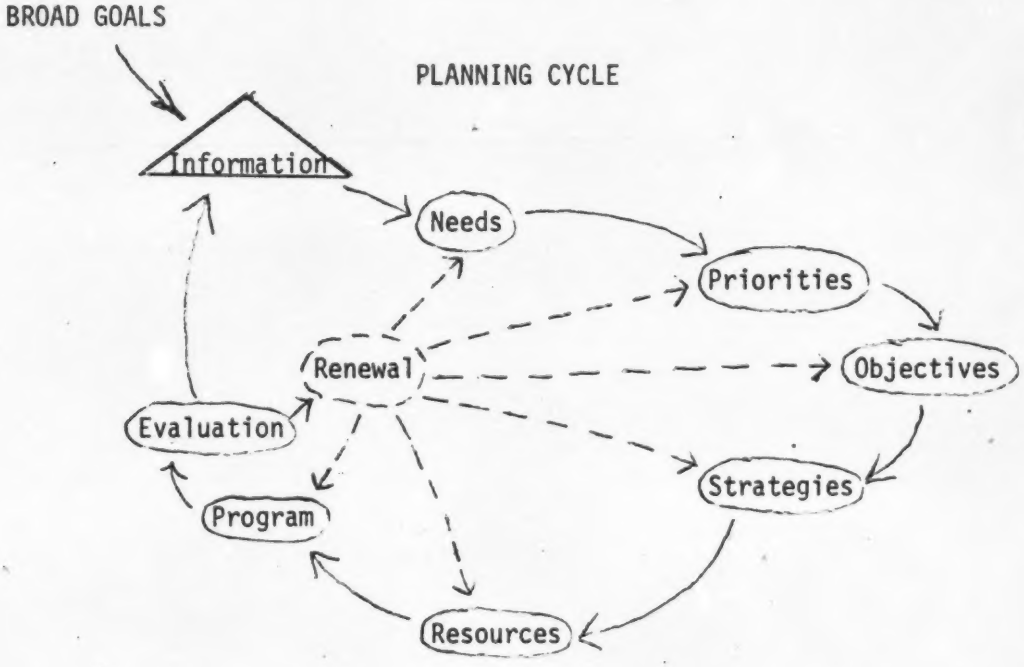
Turner, A. Lynn. "School Finance, Civil Rights, and Accountability--Taxes Make Waves." Catalyst for Change. Fall, 1972.

APPENDIX ONE

ACCOUNTABILITY COMPONENTS IN TEXAS

1. Goals for Public School Education in Texas (adopted 10-70, revised 4-73)

2. Planning Process Model- Texas Education Agency

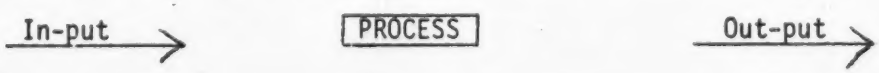


3. Program planning, Budgeting, Evaluating System (Bull. 679)

4. Educational Management Information System (EMIS)

5. Performance Emphasis- Accreditation

6. Performance-Based Teacher Certification



APPENDIX TWO

TEN DIMENSIONS -- ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Community Involvement
2. Technical Assistance
3. Needs Assessment
4. Management Systems
5. Performance Objectives
6. Planning Program Budgeting
7. Staff Development
8. Comprehensive Evaluation
9. Cost Effectiveness
10. Program Auditing

Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The utilization of members of concerned community groups in appropriate phases of public agency operations to facilitate--

access to community resources

community understanding of agency objectives

procedures and accomplishments

discharge of agency responsibilities to relevant community, client, service, and support groups.

Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The means for providing adequate resources in agency planning, implementation, operation, and evaluation by drawing upon community, business, industrial, labor, educational, scientific, artistic, social/welfare, and governmental agencies for expertise and services necessary to effective operations.

Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The identification of target-group and situational factors and products essential to the planning of a relevant program of action. It facilitates making planning decisions regarding the modification and development of new and existing programs by focusing attention on the important problems.

Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The adaption of the systems approach, through such techniques as Management by Objectives, PPBS, PERT, CPM, and information systems to agency program management.

The above tools and techniques deal with the allocation and control of resources in relation to specified objectives based on identified needs. The utilization of these tools provides the application of the systems approach designated as management systems.

Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

The specification of agency goals and objectives in a comprehensive, precise manner which indicates measures and means for assessing the degree of attainment of predetermined standards. Measurable communicable performance objectives are needed at the agency level, program level, and manager level. Successful development of performance objectives at these three levels is prerequisite to the implementation of an accountability program. Three important dimensions are critical in the definition and formulation of objectives:

1. An objective must be observable.
2. There must be some control over the attainment of the objective.
3. There must be a committment to attain the objective.

Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.

PLANNING PROGRAM BUDGETING

The allocation of fiscal resources in accordance with agency and program objectives to be realized, rather than by object or functions to be supported.

Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The determination of the nature and extent of staff development needed for the successful implementation of the accountability concept, and the design and conduct of indicated development activities. Staff development is important at each level in a service agency organization. If properly used, this factor can provide an excellent vehicle for attaining accountability.

Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.

COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION

The establishment of systems of performance control based on the continuous assessment of program and management processes and resultant products. Evaluation is the systematic procedure for collecting and analyzing reliable and valid information for the purpose of decision-making.

Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

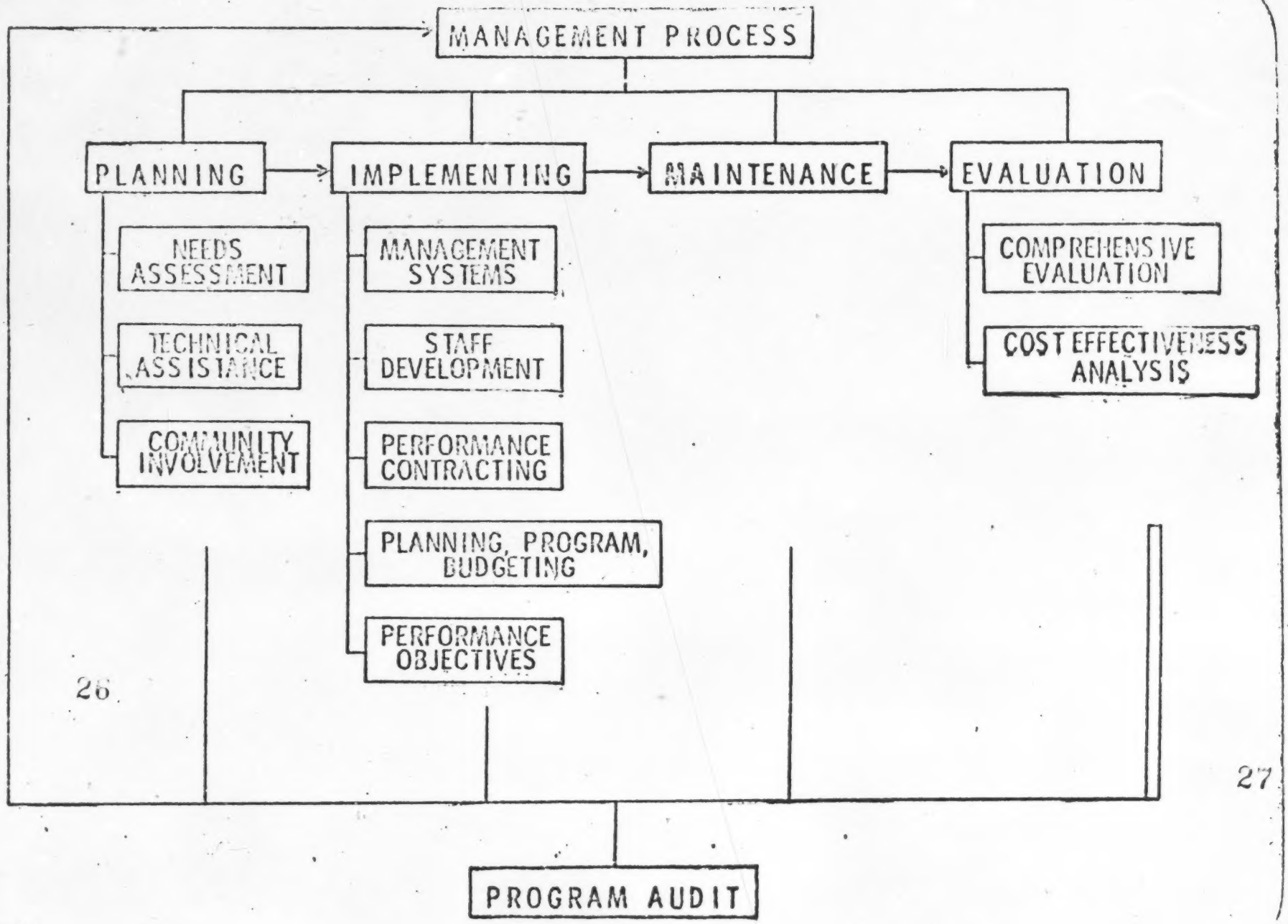
The analysis of unit results obtained in relation to unit resources consumed under alternative approaches to program (project) operation, as a determinant in continued program (project) planning.

Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.

PROGRAM AUDITING

A performance control system based upon external reviews conducted by qualified outside technical assistance, designed to verify the results of the evaluation of an educational program (project) and to assess the appropriateness of evaluation procedures for determining the effectiveness of program (project) operation and management.

Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.



26

27

Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.

ACCOUNTABLE -- FOR WHAT

Accomplishments of Goals

Goals, Criteria, Roles, Responsibilites all change. Therefore, you must plan on a long-range and a short-range basis, so that the plan will fit the changing roles and goals.

Accountable for

Planning

Implementation

Maintenance

Evaluation

Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES

Two Basic Assumptions

1. The clearer the idea one has of what he is trying to accomplish, the greater the changes of success
2. Progress can be measured only in terms of one's goals

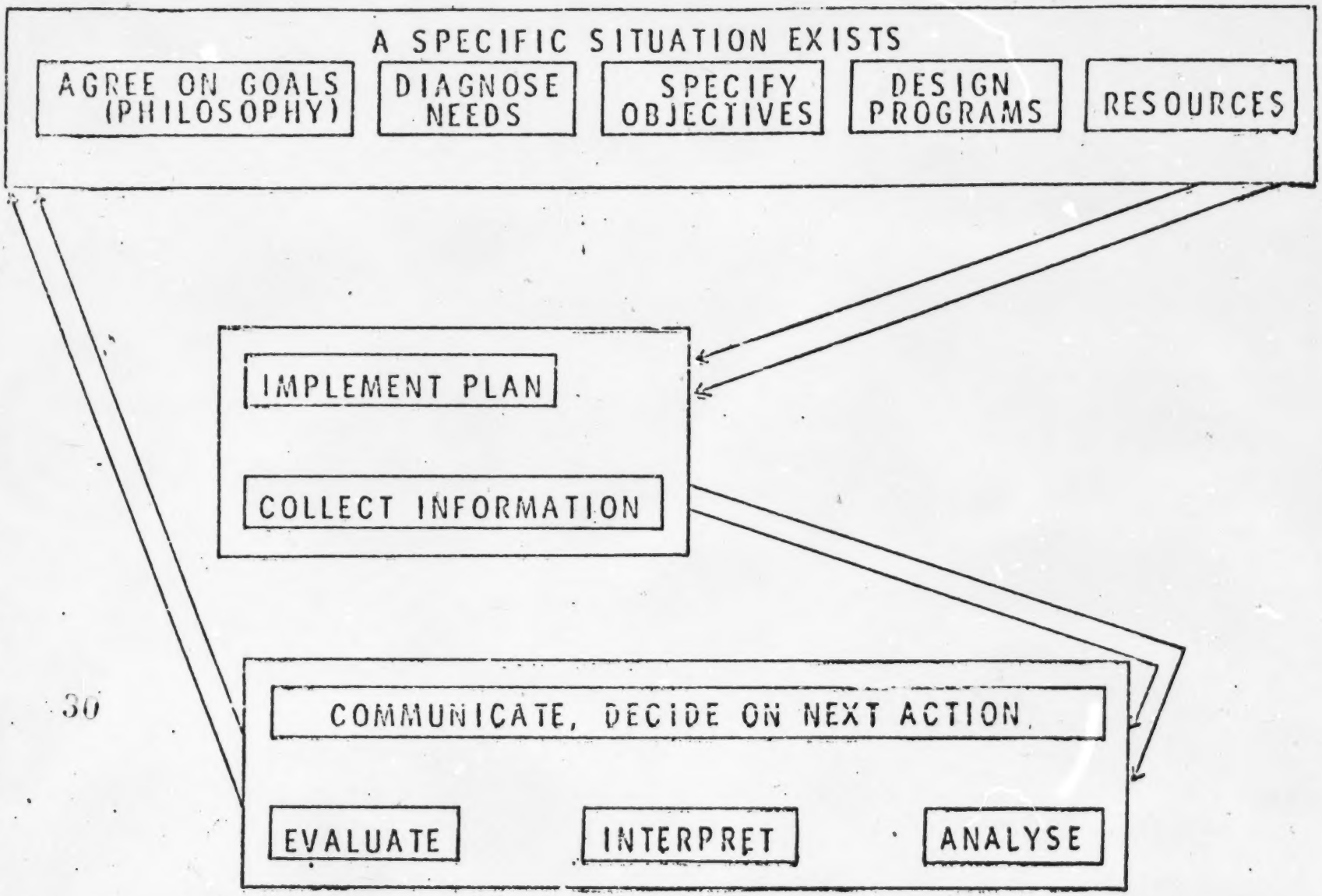
Three Steps:

1. Set objectives in terms of expected results
2. Work toward these objectives
3. Review Progress toward the goals

Each Person Involved in Evaluation Should:

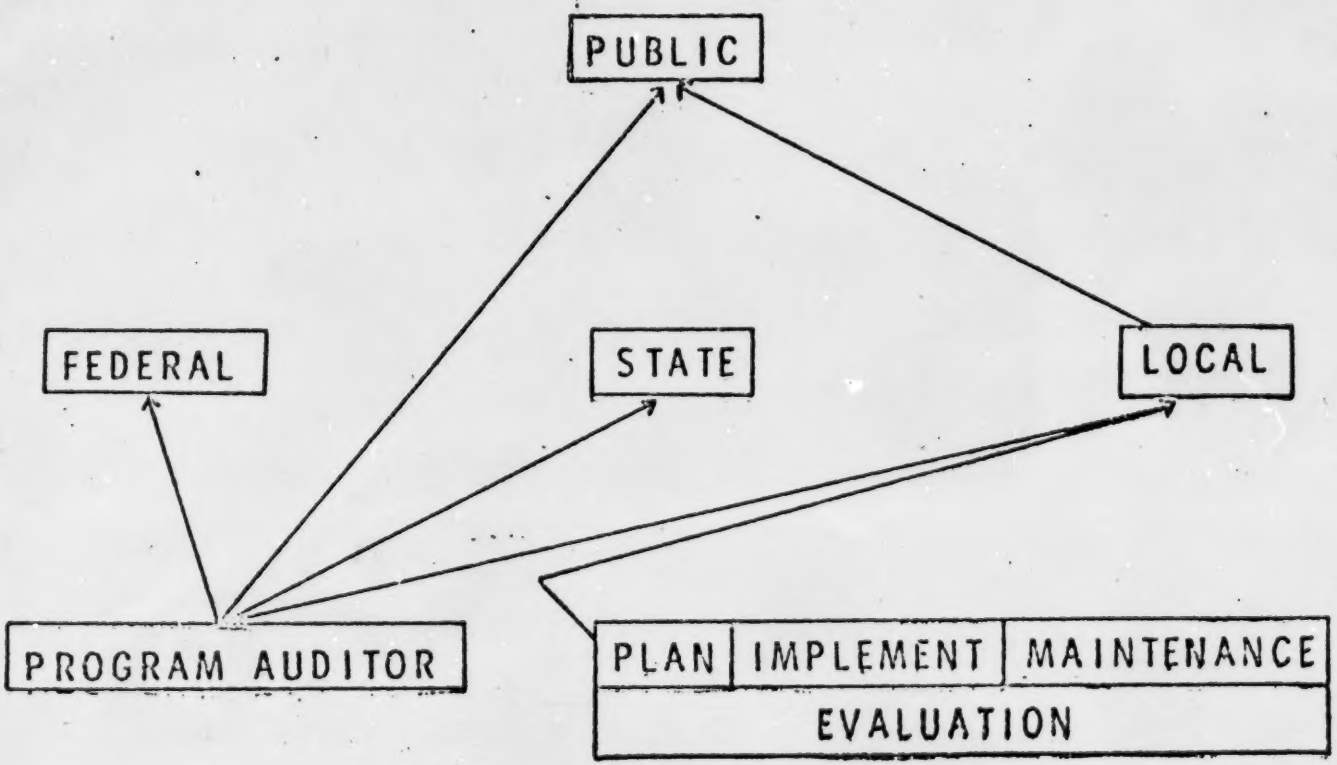
1. Understand the plan
2. Know which part of the plan he is responsible for
3. Know what results are expected
4. Know how results will be measured

Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.



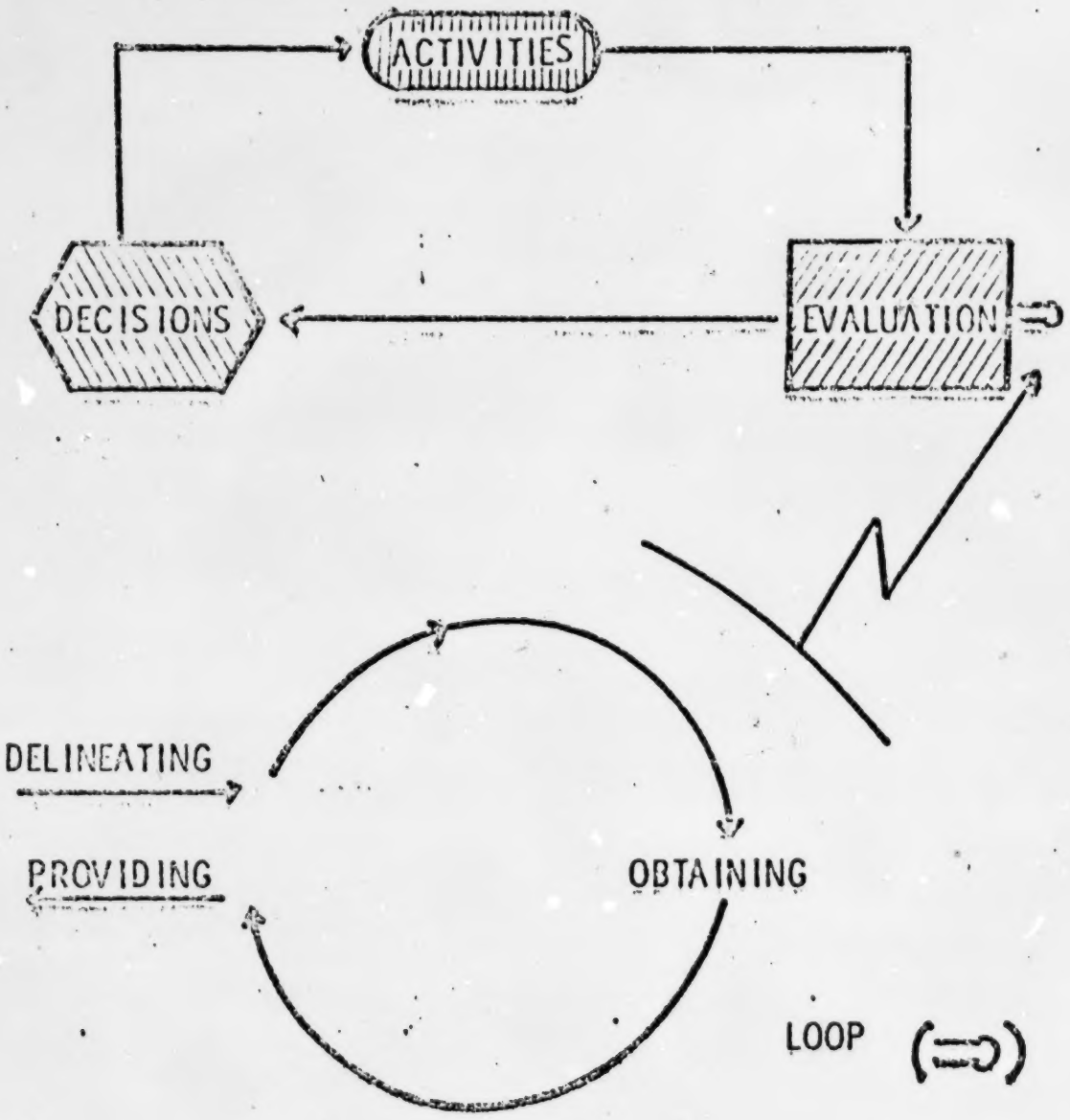
Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.

LOCAL PROGRAM



Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.

The Relation of Evaluation to Decision Making



Texas Education Agency. Austin, Texas, 1972.